

## The Scope of the First Nations Government Agreements

Any laws made by Meadow Lake First Nations under these arrangements will operate alongside current federal and provincial laws that apply on reserve. In particular, the Criminal Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms will continue to apply. Most First Nations laws would apply to First Nation members and non-members who reside on reserve.

The Meadow Lake First Nations, MLTC and the federal and provincial governments recognize that people who are not members of First Nations will be affected by First Nations government arrangements. These people will be given ample opportunity for input into decisions which significantly affect them.

The Agreements-in-Principle contain a commitment to negotiate a framework agreement for possible future negotiations on First Nation access to and participation in the management of and benefits from areas they regard as their traditional territories. Each party will seek approval of the framework before negotiations begin.

Public information sessions are planned during the period leading up to the Final Agreement. The Final Agreement, which will be negotiated over the next two years, will also need to be approved by the nine Meadow Lake First Nations, MLTC, Saskatchewan and Canada.

## Contact information

To get a copy of the Meadow Lake First Nations Government Agreements-in-Principle or for more information about Meadow Lake First Nations Government, contact:



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# THE PATH AHEAD



**Plain Facts about  
the Meadow Lake First Nations  
government initiative**

## Meadow Lake First Nations Government

Nine First Nations in northwestern Saskatchewan are negotiating First Nations government arrangements with the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan.

First Nations government is recognition of the ability to make laws on reserve, a critical element for economic self-sufficiency and social development. First Nations government builds on the foundation of Meadow Lake First Nations (MLFNs) and the Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) record of success in program delivery and economic growth. These talks are aimed at ensuring that the power to make key community decisions is in the hands of people in those communities.

Open and responsible and accountable First Nations governments increase investor confidence and support economic partnerships and investments in order to promote economic development and improve social conditions.

The First Nations government talks do not involve new land or the payment of a cash settlement to First Nations. First Nations members will not see changes to any Aboriginal or Treaty rights.



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## The Meadow Lake Tribal Council

The Meadow Lake Tribal Council represents five Cree and four Dene First Nations who are part of Treaties 6, 8 and 10. Altogether there are about 10,000 First Nation members, with about half living on reserves.

Since its creation in 1982, MLTC has a demonstrated record of accountability to MLFNs members, delivering distinguished service to MLFNs and in establishing several successful businesses. MLTC has delivered surplus budgets and open and transparent administration of programs since its establishment. The tribal council delivers the education, health and social services the First Nations need, already managing about 85 per cent of programs and services people in communities depend upon.

Along with this record of public service, MLTC has implemented a 20-year economic plan dedicated to seeing its members achieve economic, employment and social parity with the rest of the province. This vision is aimed at creating jobs for members as well as establishing viable businesses that will result in equity ownership and wealth creation for First Nations.

The flagship of the business fleet, Norsask Forest Products, produces lumber for the North American construction industry. MLTC is also active in trucking, oil and forest management. They have even begun a joint venture with Mosquito Indians of Nicaragua.



## Meadow Lake First Nations's Vision

As far as the Meadow Lake First Nations and MLTC have come, and even with the solid management record in government and business the tribal council has established, the MLFNs are still constrained by the outdated regulations of the *Indian Act*

The signing of bilateral and tripartite agreements with the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan clear the way for detailed negotiations towards a final agreement. MLFNs believe First Nations government will ensure the reins for future economic, social and political development will be where they should be - in the hands of the residents of its communities. The Meadow Lake First Nations are not interested in creating a country within a country or a zone of exclusion. Rather they want to be more included in the future of Saskatchewan and Canada.

First Nations government is a basis for creating stable, self-reliant communities that can participate fully in the economic growth of Canada. It will mean communities can return to their historical self-reliance, making their own laws at the local level.

